

Policy Development and Direction of Urban-Rural Interaction after 1990's in Japan

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In this paper, I evaluated urban-rural interaction through agricultural and forestry policies in Japan since the 1990s, then discussed courses of action. Three themes were dominant in the early 1990s: change from 'private-sector-led large scale resort development' to bureaucrat-led 'farm resort' or 'green tourism'; change from 'comprehensive forestland use' to 'public participation in forest management'; and volunteer forest management activities - both top-down and bottom-up. In the late 1990s, amid the policy shift from the Agricultural Basic Law and Forestry Basic Law to the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas and Basic Law on Forests and Forestry, the urban-rural interaction became a pillar of local revitalisation policies, and as of 2002, it became part of the government's economic revitalisation policy, being developed into a mammoth project conducted through cooperation of eight governmental ministries. Such changes in the nature of interaction reflect the national policy of rationalising domestic agriculture and forestry, due to globalisation and trade liberalisation. Meanwhile, civic activities for food safety and bountiful forests are contributing positively in rural communities, which has found in them a means of survival.

Keywords: Urban-Rural Interaction, Green Tourism, Multi habitation, National land policy, Agricultural and Forestry Policies

1. Introduction

The 'interaction of cities and the countryside' became part of promotion policies to revitalise rural communities in the 1970s. These policies aimed to revitalise the rural communities by utilising countryside as a place for recreation in response to the leisure demands of urban residents. Rural depopulation had become a serious issue and overcrowding, resulting from relocation to cities, rapid economic growth, deteriorated urban living environments in the cities.

Later, when it was evident that the collapse of the bubble economy in 1991 would lead to the demise of the widely promoted, private-sector-led large-scale resort development, the policy efforts enacted by the Comprehensive Resort Areas Development Law (1987, noted below as the Resort Law) in The Fourth Comprehensive National Development Plan shifted towards bureaucrat-led 'farm resorts' that provided countryside living experiences in relatively inexpensive facilities. Under the country's 'open market' policies, 'economic structural adjustments' as well as the economic and social progress of globalisation in the late 1980s, farm resorts were

positioned as an important pillar of agricultural policy: the policy promoted green tourism in a series of measures that focused on the hilly and mountainous areas through New Food, Agricultural and Forestry Policies (hereafter New Policies), based on the acceptance of the GATT Uruguay Round.

In this way, the government has played a strong role in shaping certain aspects of the urban-rural interaction, notably through the urban bias demonstrated through its one-sided national policy. However, given the government bias, key agricultural and forestry industries that are fundamental to the rural communities and characterise their landscape have the opportunity to effectively revitalise communities using local resources. This can be accomplished through development activities geared towards the interaction between countryside and urban residents who have agriculture and forestry experience. Furthermore, in recent years, the urban-rural interaction has gained attention for its efforts to create new personnel responsible for regional development. These efforts are aimed at not only a simple exchange of tourism but also continual participation from urban residents

through agriculture and forestry support, environmental conservation activities and a broad concept that includes settlement or semi-settlement (multi-habitation) of new residents.

The sharp decline in the Japanese economy stemming from the recent global financial crisis and the deteriorating labour market have, however, had serious effects on local economies. This decline combined with the negative effects of the former Prime Minister Koizumi's Structural Reform has significantly limited the sustainability of the countryside communities. Under these circumstances, is it possible to gain insight into how to rebuild the relationships between urban and rural areas? In response to this question, in this paper I evaluate the urban-rural interaction through agricultural and forestry policies since the 1990s, and then discuss further courses of action in developing these interactions.

2. Major turning points in the interaction of cities and the countryside during the early 1990s

When examining the trends in policy development on the urban-rural interaction in the 1990s, three themes of change become evident: 'private-sector-led large scale resort development' to 'bureaucrat-led farm resort' or 'green tourism'; 'comprehensive forestland use' to 'public participation to forest management'; and 'volunteer forest management activities', both top-down and bottom-up.¹⁾

2.1 Private-sector-led large scale Resort Development to Green Tourism

The private-sector-led large scale resort development projects that swept across the country in the late 1980s were forced to suspend or halt their activities in many regions after the collapse of the bubble economy in the first half of the 1990s. Due to these circumstances, the government quickly switched its policy strategy to bureaucrat-led farm resort or green tourism, introducing a series of new projects. The Path to Future Resort Development²⁾ issued by the Comprehensive Resort Area Study Group in 1993 brought together the resort development projects at that time and introduced a new philosophy of resort policy that reflected public criticism of the resorts. An opinion

prevailed that their high prices made them inaccessible, their contribution to local revitalisation was inadequate and their activities contributed to the destruction of the natural environment and landscape. The goals for the local forestry and fisheries demonstrated in the New Policy was to create a 'small-scale resort dedicated to a return to nature and agriculture', requiring new resorts to meet three criteria: (1) be affordable enough so that an entire family could reasonably stay for one week, (2) contribute to local development and (3) preserve the natural environment and promote bountifulness of the land. In the same year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry began the development of interaction facilities in each area and the infrastructure to promote green tourism through the integration of the existing exchange projects that were actively promoted as part of the Countryside and Forestry project started by three ministries: the former Ministry of Home Affairs, the former National Land Agency and the Forestry Agency.³⁾ In the following year, 1994, the Act on Promotion of Development of Infrastructures for Leisure Stay in Rural Areas (Green Tourism Law) was enacted, establishing a registration system for farm and fishery lodgings.

In this way, policies shifted from the extremes of 'private-sector-led' to 'bureaucrat-led' and 'large-scale' to 'small-scale'. A prime example of this shift was the movement from the agricultural policy of the 'economic structural adjustments' and 'open market' policies of 1985 to the 'new policies' of 1992 that was set up after the GATT Uruguay Round Agreement. The de facto abandonment policy of local agriculture was set as a given condition for further expansion of agricultural and forest products import. Instead, the policies which promoted the urban-rural interaction through green tourism were launched as one of the measures to ensure income support for the entire region as a condition for new settlement. From that point, the urban-rural interaction became a strong support for rural development policies.

2.2 From Comprehensive Forestland Use to Public participation to forest management

The urban-rural interaction regarding forestlands developed through two streams: 'comprehensive forestland use' which was intended to provide

facilities for health and recreation that became fully effective in 1970, and 'public participation to forest management' in the mid 1980s that promoted public awareness and understanding of the forest issues to encourage support in kind and/or financially. The former was promoted as part of forest policy as the development of conditions and possibility for a long-term residency, which ensured the income of local residents and foresters, and then the infrastructure improvement of leisure facilities such as ski resorts, campgrounds, and forest parks.

There was also a restructuring of domestic agriculture and forestry in the 1980s under the Ad Hoc Commission on Administrative Reform. Under this Reform, the government authorities established two goals for domestic forestry: (1) further development of the 'comprehensive forestland use' and (2) the promotion of 'public participation to forest management'. While a significant decline in the profitability of forestry was expected, the reform did provide an opportunity of new capital investment by developing forest resources as a place for resort development. It also continued to emphasise on environmental and land conservation functions of forests, which it considered 'the common property of the people' and part of a 'benefit assessment' including local governments and urban residents. In other words, the government authorities worked out a concept of bearing forest management funds as a national burden.

Such strategy was also strongly reflected in the 'improvement plan', which aimed at overcoming the decline in the quality of state-owned forest management.⁴⁾ The Second Business Plan for the Improvement of National Forest Land in 1984 was initially established to ensure an independent income through the promotion of forest recreation businesses, contributing to increased land-use fees actively introduced in the private sector. In addition, the Forestry Agency developed a system that 'responded to a national request for green resources', establishing a Green Owner System⁵⁾ to facilitate investment from city residents. In 1987, private-sector-led large-scale resort development projects started within the national forests in cooperation with the resort development policies.

These actions, along with the use of state-owned forestland for private-sector-led large-scale resort

development were incorporated into The Fourth Comprehensive National Development Plan in 1987. 'Public participation to forest management' sought 'to expand its system of voluntary cooperation and introduce funds from urban centres to finance the revitalisation of forestry and mountain villages' and 'to introduce a national movement that attempts to advance the public participation in forest management aimed at raising public awareness of the growth and protection of the forests' were built in as a part of the National Land Policy.⁶⁾ The outcomes of the private-sector-led large-scale resort development initiative have been mentioned above. Since then, the policy no longer places much emphasis on the comprehensive forestland use as hard business; instead, the objective of 'public participation to forest management' has become the mainstream political approach to the urban-rural interaction. The 'comprehensive forestland use' was also structured along these lines. Building on the Funds for Forests with Green and Water⁷⁾ policy established in 1988, there was an emphasis on public awareness of the importance of education and contribution to forests. In particular, forest environmental education for children was actively developed in the forestry administration through public participation to forest management events and the support of forest volunteer projects.

2.3 The formation of the citizen sector and development of the forest volunteer activities

The rapid development of the so-called 'forest volunteer' of the 1990s was an important trend in forestry during this period. Since the introduction of the term 'forest volunteer' in the White Paper on Forestry in 1990, its impact has increased yearly, both in policy and practice. Volunteer forest management activities were developed during the 1990s and continue to promote activities that represent a 'change to citizen-initiated, decentralised from bureaucrat-led centralized activity'.⁸⁾ An immediate opportunity for current revitalisation is found in 'public participation to forest management' movements that were shaped by both government initiative and growing interest in forest development created by the 1985 'International Year of Forests'. In addition to these policies and social movements, citizen-led activities

in urban areas and suburbs around major cities began to appear. The expanding social awareness of environmental issues and increase in volunteer activities developed after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995; the growth of environment-oriented citizens following the 1992 Earth Summit; the diversification of demand in regard to forests; the failure of past forest policies become evident as its centralised blanket policy bias to artificial forests resulted in management shortage issues led to the revitalisation of the interest in forestry and natural preservation.

There was an expansion of administration-led supporting activities. Simultaneously, a nationwide network of volunteer forest management such as the formation of the Morizukuri Forum (1995) progressed through citizen initiative, and the formation of a citizen group for forest management took the initiative. This type of movement developed in the late 1990s to advocate forestry administration policy and represented the culmination of forestry volunteer activities during this period.

3. Policy development of interaction of cities and the countryside since the late 1990s

Let's take a look at policy development from the late 1990s to the present, focusing on the trends in political changes in the urban-rural interaction. As the bubble economy collapsed and foreign direct investment came into full swing, the Japanese economy suffered full-fledged de-industrialisation and fell into a prolonged 10-year recession. In particular, the sharp increase in the volume of agricultural product imports under the liberalisation of the imports system established by the WTO in 1995 aggravated the condition of domestic farming operations and posed a threat to rural Japan.

3.1 The interaction of cities and the countryside/rural districts in the Fifth Comprehensive National Development Plan

The Grand Design of the Land in the 21st Century (The Fifth Plan), formulated in 1998, considered the whole country as the target of development strategies, and sought 'the Formation of Multi-polar Distributed Land' by means of 'participation and cooperation' while setting four new areas of

operation - Northeast, the Sea of Japan, Pacific Ocean and Western Japan. According to the Fifth Plan, the Fourth plan whose goal was 'Multi-polar Distributed Land' caused an over-concentration of economic power in Tokyo and failed to bridge the economic disparity between Tokyo and other regions.⁹⁾

The rural areas were designated as 'national frontier land to enable a new way of life in the 21st Century' and as 'multi-residential'. Rural areas requested that their role be characterized by their interaction with the city rather than as a production base for food supply. In order to promote interaction with the city, they needed to create new industries with a compound usage of a variety of resources in the region and to promote residential and industrial expansion through green tourism and recreation. In addition, they needed to promote the future expansion of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries. This promotion would generate employment creation and the industrial development through the use of advanced information communication infrastructure.¹⁰⁾

In this way, under the Fifth Plan, green tourism interaction between the cities and the countryside was an increasingly important local revitalisation measure and was expected to develop new integral industries in rural areas. It was hoped that these industries would also increase the number of residents by creating new jobs in rural areas. This demonstrated a structural outline that sought to promote U-JI Turn.¹¹⁾

3.2 Changes to the Basic Law of Agriculture, Forestry and the role of the government in determining the interaction of cities and the countryside

Forestry policy in Japan went through a series of major changes before and after the year 2000, notably during the 1998 bankruptcy of state-owned forestry projects and the radical reforms thereafter, as well as during the 2001 conversions to the Basic Law on Forest and Forestry (referred to below as the New Basic Law).

The direction of these policy changes occurred against the background of a structural crisis in agriculture and forestry caused by increasing globalisation and liberalisation. They demonstrated a shift of focus to multi-functionality in alignment

with the international trend towards environmental awareness and the diversification of national needs. Reductions in the role of timber production are reflected in the promotion of 'public participation to forest management', which intends to create social opportunities to support forestry. From the perspective of the Forest and Forestry Basic Act, the interaction of cities and the countryside and the promotion of rural regions are as follows.

In the Forest and Forestry Basic Act, forestry plays an important role in demonstrating the multifunctional roles of forests (Article 3). The Act states that, 'It is important that forestry production activity is carried out continuously in mountain communities in order to promote the conservation and proper maintenance of forests' (Article 2). In addition, the 'importance of forest owners to take up residency in the mountain communities' (Article 15) aims to facilitate the construction of mountain communities by promoting residence, improving the quality of living, and increasing job opportunities through industries created by the production and sale of local products (Article 15). In order to enact these policies, there is a need for promotional activities to increase settlement in mountain communities and an emphasis on the importance of these communities in demonstrating the multiple functions of forests. Also required were the 'promotion of voluntary public activities' in Article 16 and the intent 'to deepen people's understanding and concern for the forests and forestry and exchange promotions between rural and urban communities in order to contribute to a healthy, relaxing lifestyle and to promote the use of forests for education and public health' in Article 17. These were established as important parts of the forest and forestry policy, along with the revised 'public participation to forest management', 'urban-rural interaction' and 'comprehensive forestland use'.

The Basic Forest and Forestry Plan (Primary Plan) was formulated at the same time citing the 'revitalisation of rural areas' as one of the 'topics exhibiting the diversified functions of forests'. These topics were 'to promote the union of city and rural communities', first by 'increasing employment opportunities by utilizing the unique appeal of rural communities and forest resources and by developing a living environment that corresponds

to the needs of U-JI Turn'. It also promoted residence in rural areas through community development in accordance with the functions and positions that emphasised base communities. It also sought coexistence with the city and countryside by 'developing various acceptance systems for city residents through the training of forest experience instructors, the development of multimedia communication networks and interaction infrastructures that would contribute to the revitalisation of rural communities through interaction with the cities'.

Revitalisation measures concerning rural communities like these are discussed in detail in The Committee Report concerning the Development and Community Revitalisation Measures from the viewpoint of rural communities exhibiting continuous various functions of the forest¹²⁾ published in 2001. The report placed importance on initiatives that help rural communities recognise their intrinsic value rather than seeking to imitate model cities. It also emphasised the following four points: (1) to ensure employment opportunities that utilise local resources to the maximum; (2) to handle issues that cause residents to lose 'pride' in their own area; (3) to promote the active acceptance of U-JI Turn people who are seeking residence in natural areas; (4) to build harmonious relationships between rural communities and cities. In order to ensure various functions of the forest, it is important that the owners reside in rural communities and a routine system be set up to undertake forest management as an ideal way of future rural area development as put forth in the New Basic Law. This report additionally proposed that 'local promotion reflects various values in liberal exchanges with others outside of the area so those people can understand the appeal of rural communities'.

In its consideration of the 'characteristics of revitalisation policies of rural communities', the report concretely presents two points. One is the direction of industrialised interaction with cities. Multiple forms of employment in rural communities were developed by fostering new industries and using area resources more effectively. The proposal seeks to ensure stable employment, and as such, it provides paid sponsorship of the industry of tourism in rural communities. For example, until

now the opportunity for interaction with city residents was largely sponsored as a service to rural communities. In addition, the report recommended initiatives to further combine the promotion measures of local industries, such as collaborative activities promoting the use of local lumber in house construction, as a way of interacting with city residents.

The other is the connection between city residents' participation in regional development and forest management. From this point on, rural area development will need to emphasize establishing partnerships with city residents who can, (1) sponsor ideas, (2) sponsor funds, (3) sponsor irregular periods in the workforce, (4) sponsor the workforce in the short-term by semi-residence in the rural communities and (5) ultimately sponsor a workforce over a long period by residing in the rural communities. It is also important to establish a system of acceptance for rural communities with city residents according to these various stages. This strategy was put into action in a series of projects by the Forestry Agency, as a competition for the selection of a business plan that created new industry using forest area resources; the support of model works based on selected plans; national support of initiatives in leading areas relating to the development of exchange activities in cooperation with the cities and the improvement of resident acceptance. In addition, these projects have characteristics that are set by transitional structures designed to coordinate local governments, city residents and rural areas (residents and forestry cooperative); build an opportunity for public discussion; formulate the area revitalisation plan to take advantage of the features of each area; promote the development of human resources; and implement the creation of certain rural communities that appeal through research.

3.3 The Coexistence and Interaction of Cities and Rural Districts Project

Even within the agricultural and national policies, important developments were seen in the nature of the interaction between cities and the countryside. First, the 1999 'Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas' highlighted the importance of urban agriculture by promoting the

'interaction of cities and rural areas' through green tourism and the development of allotment gardens. A plan which included the importance of residents and semi-residents as a means of promoting green tourism was one of the three pillars of the policy put forth in the 'Food and Agriculture of the 2002 Revitalisation plan'. In the Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform in 2002', which was officially announced in the June 2002 Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, the interaction of cities and the countryside was a part of the discovering industry policy (actualisation of the market potential of extracting life style changes) within the economic revitalisation policy. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries made a cabinet decision to 'make efforts to expand the private sector as a national movement toward the realisation of life styles (dual life) in both cities and rural districts' in cooperation with other ministries'.¹³⁾

This mission to improve the interaction between rural areas and cities was transformed into a large cooperative project involving eight ministries which included, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Cabinet Office; the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (Information Infrastructure); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hands-on experience activities promotion); the Ministry of the Environment (Ecotourism, nature parks projects, natural environment restoration); the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (U-JI Turn, resident promotion, exchange promotions by use of existing stock); the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (product development using area resources); the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (long term vacation, area labour development, employment support in agriculture and forestry). This project became a means of uncovering new business opportunities. After the cabinet decision, a deputy minister of the project team was immediately established and first initiatives, such as the deregulation involved in the promotion of rural inns and the expansion of the budget relating to green tourism promotion were carried out. In addition, project team recommendations¹⁴⁾ collected in 2005 focused on the increase in the number of people moving from cities to rural districts. Since 2007, approximately 7 million baby boomers around retirement age are

‘realising their dream of living in the country’. The project team is thus focusing on measures related to residency and multi-habitation, anticipating the market potential of relocation of the baby boomer generation to the countryside.

In other words, there is a significant reduction in resident population and an ageing population in hilly, mountainous and remote regional areas. The expansion of non-residential areas has been a concern, in addition to the difficulty of lifestyle-related service providers and basic public services, as well as the decline of regional culture, such as traditional festivals of the area. Furthermore, the co-management of local resources is not possible since natural disasters have made issues of national land conservation more apparent. Due to these circumstances, various measures have been introduced for the purpose of increasing the resident population.

Japan as a whole peaked as a ‘shrinking population’ in 2006. As an increase in the resident population is not expected in all regions, the purpose of the ‘multi-habitation’ promotion plan is to expand the ‘exchange population’ by encouraging city dwellers to develop a preference for living in the regional area. This would create a varied lifestyle for both city residents and agricultural communities, increase consumer demand, acquire new people for community activities, festivals and regional cultural activities, along with the creation of housing demand and the utilisation of idle farmland in the form of ‘weekend agriculture’. This so-called multi-habitation has been a part of the national land policy since the Fourth Comprehensive National Development Plan; however, this time the promotion measures are largely characterised by the desire to recruit a large number of baby boomers to fill positions such as regional development supporters, local community rebirth supporters, or (forestry) farming supporters, who are relatively long-term, but temporary ‘multi-inhabitants’. Based on 2006 data, 42 prefectures have already promoted important policies to advance initiatives to attract people and utilise vacant space by providing consultation services and offering experience and training tours.¹⁵⁾

In May 2007, the new laws regarding residential and regional exchange promotions for rural districts revitalisation were enacted and the

country set a basic course of action regarding rural districts revitalisation through residential and regional exchange promotions. The prefectures, cities and districts were able to create a revitalisation plan and local governments established a subsidy for grant money to cover the expenses of implementing the project. The government set policy aims to increase residents by 1.5 million and multi-inhabitants by 3 million in the rural districts over the next 10 years (2006–2016). They also aim to expand the annual number of guests in selected facilities by 1.1 million people each year (in 2004 from 7.70 to 8.80 million people) between the years 2004 to 2009 and to increase the number of allotted farm partitions by 30,000 by the end of the 2009 fiscal year (12,000 to 15,000 in 2003).¹⁶⁾

4. Two trends in the interaction of cities and the countryside

As stated above, since the stages of the New Basic Law, the rural communities’ revitalisation measures focus on agriculture in a globalised era and the critical state of rural communities. They are not directed by an orthodox promotion method of domestic agriculture, but instead follow the national policy that is in line with the contents of the Fifth National Plan, placing undue reliance on the diversification of citizens’ needs, interaction with cities, and the cooperation and understanding of city residents. The interaction of cities and the countryside in the present stage is part of a major national project and was consciously developed to serve ‘the needs of the baby boomers’ who are expected to both contribute to the rebirth of regional communities and to act as direct supporters of rural community revitalisation. In addition, there was an expansion of the list of projects and the budgets. There was also a strengthening of the trend towards competitive funding for research expenses and the introduction of projects by competition, which basically consists of ‘selection and concentration’. Under these circumstances, the initiative utilising the urban-rural interaction during this period have had some success in the revitalisation of countryside communities and it has fostered the need for agricultural communities and the importance of agriculture to the citizens. Based on the results of a nationwide survey,¹⁷⁾ during 2001, the number of

facilities and activities promoting interaction between the cities and the countryside was 32,183, with total annual sales of 5,984 billion yen and 580 million users. The support of small farmers through farmers' market operations and increases in employment have been attributed to the increase, leading to an increase in immigration and positive effects on local revitalisation.

According to the results of the poll on supplying food, anxiety over food safety has increased due to issues such as the recent bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and food mislabelling. The poll showed that in terms of staples and food in general, nearly 90% of the respondent believed that it is better to produce them domestically as much as possible under the condition of lower production cost. Thus, it can be predicted that there will be greater momentum behind the evaluation of domestic agriculture.¹⁸⁾ In addition, in terms of forest and rural communities, forest volunteer groups have increased every year at an accelerated rate, rising from 277 groups in 1997 to 1863 in 2006.¹⁹⁾ Again, the volume of forest volunteer activities will increase and the nature of their activities will show a remarkable qualitative diversification, such as the involvement of forest owners and the timber industry in residential construction; the direct connection of the structures to builders and consumers (property owners); activities aimed at expanding the regional consumption of domestic timber materials (referred to as the movement to build a house from nearby trees); exchange with local residents leading to volunteer forest activities. These are all examples of expansion in total support of local community activities. Furthermore, since the middle of 2000, many acts concerning forest development and conservation have been independently formulated by prefectures, cities and towns and projects have been carried out for forest management by the cooperative participation of various entities, including NGOs and the general public.

Through forest volunteer activities, awareness about regional forest and forestry issues are being raised. Local revitalisation initiatives are also being made by utilising perspectives of U-JI turn people and other citizens who seek to rebuild relationships between urban and rural communities while working with forest owners. Such efforts have

been hailed as breakthrough strategies for the critical situation forestry and rural communities are faced with. The nature of the current urban-rural situation shows the strong influence of globalisation, particularly in terms of the national policy to reduce restructuring domestic agriculture in conjunction with the flow of liberalization. It also, however, shows development towards cooperation with countryside communities in order to revitalise the areas, with the promotion of citizen activities that ensure continuation of appropriate forest management, domestic agriculture and food safety within agricultural communities. The urban-rural interaction currently shows the strong influence of policies aimed at creating a global nation, as well as a more harmonious relationship between cities and agricultural communities.

5. Conclusion

The Report on the National Spatial Plan (Nation Wide plan),²⁰⁾ officially released in November 2007, emphasised a spatial view whereby each region had a position within East Asia, based on their advancement in economic globalisation and economic development and the advent of full-fledged population decline. In this context, it is not difficult to imagine further reductions in domestic agriculture as local industry continues to disappear. Despite the disparities between the actual localities under the direction of the national land policy like this, it is a concern that depopulation and rural community issues will be further consumed by the forces of globalisation. In addition, matters relating to the urban-rural interaction have become prominent, including, the promotion of 'multi-habitation', 'citizen-operated national land' (a larger version of 'popular participation to forest management'), the decline of territorial communities, to the expansion of principal actors, the direction of self-sustaining development due to public regional efforts, and public service through cooperation with various organizations. As mentioned earlier, the urban-rural interaction through green tourism initiatives are increasingly effective in regions with certain local revitalisations and many cases have been seen where the U-JI Turn people have also played an important role in the creation of new of entities in the regions.

The national policy has moved forward without any measures to fundamentally revitalise rural communities. However, policy measures tend to benefit urban businesses and city residents more than countryside communities. In addition, the recent trend towards competitive funding projects and selection leaves many areas behind. These areas have an increasing aging population and difficulty in voluntarily and autonomously tackling new projects due to shortage of finance and resources. This will result in the expansion of regional imbalances. Moreover, in national lands owned by people or 'new public', the expected direction towards citizens' collaboration and participation would be potential plans thanks to the recent growth of the civic sector. This also suggests that they could be alternatives to reducing or withdrawing the administrative body in light of recent reduction in forestry finance or the Trinity Act.

The development of rural policy is often in conflict with national policies towards globalisation and the lack of mutual understanding between agricultural communities and cities resulted in the devastation of the natural environment and impoverished agricultural communities. In its present stage, however, the urban-rural interaction has fostered social consciousness, so as to redefine the residents' attitudes to the nature of capitalism itself. In this respect, one could say that the further development of the current cooperation and collaboration between cities and the countryside is a major step towards a coexistent relationship between new cities and rural communities in need of revitalisation.

Notes

- 1) Forest Volunteer is an activity voluntarily engaged in by an ordinary citizen who participates in activities such as reforestation, working in the forest and silviculture (including forests and forestry education). Japan Forestry Research Committee Edition, 'Towards the creation of a new network - Way of Forest Volunteer' Forestry Research Committee Japan, 1998, page 14.
- 2) Comprehensive Resort Area Technical Committee, 'About the nature of resort development in the future' Resort Development Study Group Dept. National Land Agency Regional Development Bureau of Internal Affairs and Communications) Edition, 'Community development towards the formation of a new interaction sphere-Resort Development

Handbook for local revitalisation' Administrative, 1994, page 13-38.

- 3) Current Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

4) State-run forestry projects in our country experienced a long period of high growth and wood shortage due to dependency on imported timber, caused by large investment expenditures in an overcutting system. It fell into continual deficit operations since the mid-1970s and became dependent on the debt situation, with a focus on the Fiscal Investment and Loan Program in 1976. In 1978, the Special Measures Law for the purpose of normalization of the state-owned forests operations was enacted, but no efforts have been made to improve management over roughly the last 20 years. However, as it resulted in the deterioration of the production basis reduction by exhaustive spending cuts, the sale of forest in order to ensure revenue and promotion of large scale resort development caused serious problems, such as aggressive provisions of use of state-owned forests that discouraged rampant forest development. However, 'The Reform Plan' did not achieve financial soundness in the end; having accumulated a debt of ¥38,000 billion, the management went bankrupt. Then, in 1998 the inheritance of most of the debt went to the General Account.

5) The Green Owner System was a framework in which the investment costs for forest silviculture to young applicants (the general public) were provided and the earnings gained by auction of the forest after 20-30 years of growth were distributed to investors at a predetermined rate. The Green Owner System was a framework in which to raise fund for silvicultural costs of young forests from the public. The proceeds gained by selling the grown forest after 20-30 years are distributed to investors at a predetermined rate. In fact, more than 90% of the forests that had been sold so far were caused a loss of principal, In fact, the principal and division at the location of more than 90% have been sold to date, and since 1999, recruitment has been dormant.

- 6) 'The Fourth Comprehensive National Development Plan,' National Land Agency, page 33-34 1987.

7) Funds for Forests with Green and Water was developed in 1998 using voluntary funds from the general public, corporations, and organizations and carried out forest management training education projects, support for forest volunteer activities, education regard forestry and forest for the general public by investment income. The project cost is about 4 billion yen annually.

- 8) 'Green Age' 32 (2), 2005, page 5, 'Current Status and Issues of volunteer forest' Shinji Yamamoto.

9) The National Land Agency Planning and Coordination Bureau - Ministry of Finance Printing Bureau Edition, 'Grand

Design of the country for the 21st Century and the beautiful creation of Land, Infrastructure and the promotion of regional self-reliance', 1998, pages 1-9.

10) Ibid. pages 87-88.

11) 'U-JI turn' has been widely used as a term indicating a U-shape population movement (ie a turn around for increase). U-turn 'is when people return back to their hometowns to settle down people out to the city,'J turn' is when people who leave the cities settle down outside their hometowns in the countryside, and 'I turn' is when people from urban areas settle in a rural location.

12) Revitalisation of mountain village settlements and maintenance measures from the viewpoint of sustainable fulfilment of the various functions of forests 'Study Group on maintenance strategies and revitalisation of the mountain communities of settlements from the viewpoint of sustainable fulfilment of the various functions of forests year 2001' report study, page 20.

13) 'Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Structural Reform in 2002', Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. 2002, pages 14-15.

14) 'Regarding further promotion of urban and rural areas and convection harmony of project team about the harmony of rural-urban convection' 2005 July 21.

15) 'Survey Report on the promotion and transfer policies to attract people to the region', National Planning Division of Land, Infrastructure and Planning Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, 2007, pages 2-3.

16) 'The Expansion Direction of Green Tourism' Regional Liaison Office and Rural Policy of Urban Agriculture Planning Department Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Rural Development Bureau, 2007, pages 14-15.

17) 'Japan and Asia's Green tourism and agriculture in rural areas' Edition Takeshi Miyazaki, Showado 2006, page 12. Original text of data, 'A Study of established calculation methods such as market research related to interaction of cities and the countryside' City and countryside interaction revitalisation methods (Ltd) February 2003.

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